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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 006267

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [US](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#) [UNGA](#)

SUBJECT: GOJ SILENT, MEDIA NEGATIVE ON POTUS SPEECH AT UNGA

Classified By: Amb. Edward W. Gnehm for reasons 1.5 (b)(d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) Although the GOJ did not issue any official commentary on President Bush's UNGA speech, the Jordanian media panned the remarks as "vulgar" and an "insult" to Arabs, particularly the section dealing with the "ideology of terrorism." Many of our contacts admitted to have not heard or read the speech themselves, but learned about it from editorial commentary. End Summary.

GOJ DOES NOT REACT TO POTUS UNGA SPEECH

2. (C) The GOJ did not issue any official response or statement commenting on President Bush's September 23 UNGA speech. Ali al-Ayed, Foreign Minister Muasher's Private Office Director, told PolCouns and PolOff September 29 that he was unaware of any public comment on the speech by any GOJ official.

POTUS SPEECH SKEWED AGAINST ARABS...

3. (U) In contrast, local media reaction to the UNGA speech was negative. Amman's Arabic Al-Ra'y on September 26 used words such as "insult" and "vulgar language" to describe the President's speech. Jihad al-Mumani's commentary, titled "He Finds it Easy to Insult the Arabs", argued that President Bush's request to Arab states to stop supporting terrorism implied that all Arab states support terrorism and all Arabs are terrorists.

...AGAINST ISLAM

4. (U) Al-Mumani further argued that the President's call to eradicate the "ideology of terrorism" was a veiled call to arms against "Arab Islamic culture" which is viewed as not agreeing with the Israeli "occupation" and "terrorism" directed against the Palestinian people. Chief Editor Taher Adwan, from the independent, mass appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm, stated that the "enmity of Arabs for America is increasing, while America seems to be in a state of war with Islam and with the Arabs, and not only with terrorism as it claims..."

COMMENT

5. (C) Despite the unusually harsh denunciations of the President's speech in the media, few of our contacts offered (or had) any independent comment. When asked, a number admitted that they had neither heard nor read the speech themselves, but learned about it on al-Jazeera or through media commentary.
GNEHM